

Hate crimes instill fear in those who have no connection to the victim other than a shared characteristic such as race or sexual orientation. For nearly 150 years, we have responded as a Nation to deter and to punish violent denials of civil rights by enacting Federal laws to protect the civil rights of all of our citizens. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 continues that great and honorable tradition. Passage of this legislation, at last, will show, once again, that America values tolerance and protects all of its people.

VOTE EXPLANATION—DOD AUTHORIZATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss my decision to vote no for the fiscal year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act.

Throughout my career I have always been a staunch supporter of our men and women that serve our Nation. Their courage in the face of danger to preserve our freedom is inspiring. And my vote on the Defense authorization bill does not change that belief at all. In fact, I was pleased to include legislation in this year's bill that will require the Secretary of Defense to review and establish a long-term plan to sustain the solid rocket motor industrial base. This review will be vital to ensure we maintain a robust industrial base and our ultimate strategic defense for decades.

I have always been impressed with the great working relationship I have enjoyed with my esteemed colleagues on the Armed Services Committee and their professional staffs. My vote by no means diminishes my respect for the Armed Forces.

Unfortunately, the congressional majority has decided to needlessly inject controversy into what should have been a bipartisan effort to fund and support our troops in a time of war. I am, of course, speaking of the decision to attach the unrelated hate crimes provisions to this legislation. For one reason or another, the Democrats have once again decided that, even with their overwhelming majorities in the House and Senate, the Federal hate crimes legislation cannot be debated and passed on its own merits and that, instead, this divisive legislation should become part and parcel with our efforts to provide our military with much-needed resources.

I have long been opposed to this approach with regard to hate crimes. Make no mistake, none of us are indifferent to the problems associated with violence motivated by prejudice and violence. However, I believe that the approach provided for in this bill would needlessly expand the powers of the Federal Government at the expense of the traditional police powers of the States. Worst of all, it would do so without a demonstrated need. Indeed, a few months back, I asked the Attorney

General—who supports this legislation, by the way, in a hearing whether there was any evidence of a trend that these crimes were going unpunished at the State level. He stated without reservation that there was no such evidence and that, in fact, the States were, by and large, doing a fine job in this area. If that is the case, what is the purpose of this legislation? Why are we going to expand the law enforcement powers of the Federal Government into what are essential State crimes when these crimes are already being handled adequately by the States? I have yet to hear a decent answer to that question.

Now, some of us may be tempted simply to vote for the Defense authorization bill with the hate crimes provisions attached simply because the balance of the bill is good and worthy of support. Well, I worry that if we go along with this now, what will they add to so-called "must pass" bills in the future? I believe that when it comes to funding our troops, we should do our best to speak in a unified voice. By taking this path, it seems that the majority would rather make a political statement than offer the military our bipartisan support. For that, I am greatly disappointed.

OBJECTION TO S. 1782

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to alert my colleagues that I intend to object to any unanimous consent agreement for the consideration of S. 1782, the Federal Judiciary Administrative Improvements Act of 2009. This legislation will increase the Federal outlays for the judicial branch and does not have an offset to the spending increases.

In particular, I object to two provisions in S. 1782. First, this legislation will increase Federal expenditures by allowing senior executives in the Federal courts, the Federal Judicial Center, and the Sentencing Commission to carry over more annual leave days from 1 year to another. The bill would change the current allowance, 240 hours—30 days—to 720 hours—90 days. This provision is a limited benefit to a number of senior executives and will cost Federal taxpayers millions of dollars.

Second, the legislation includes a provision increasing the salaries of the four division directors at the Federal Judicial Center. This provision would increase the salary from Executive Schedule V—\$139,600—to Executive Schedule IV—\$149,000. While this is only a slight increase to the spending outlays, it is the wrong message to send the American taxpayers when nearly 10 percent of the workforce is unemployed.

Americans across the country are tightening their belts and finding ways to save money. Social Security beneficiaries are fighting to stretch their dollars because they will not see a cost-of-living increase for 2010 for the first time in nearly three decades. To

expand benefits in the judicial branch for a chosen group of senior executives is the wrong thing to do when everyone is making sacrifices and millions of Americans are looking for work.

If the Senate majority insists on offering S. 1782 for consideration notwithstanding my objection, at the very least, I will insist on offering S. 657, the Sunshine in the Courtroom Act as an amendment and request a rollcall vote. Unless this amendment is afforded a vote, I will continue to object to any unanimous consent agreement regarding S. 1782. In this time of financial uncertainty, we should not be providing senior executives in the judiciary increased benefits absent legislation that will bring some sunshine to the courts by allowing media coverage of court proceedings.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO NORTH CAROLINA WWII VETERANS

• Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize a group of 102 World War II veterans from the Triad region of North Carolina who are traveling to Washington, DC, on October 28 to visit the memorials and monuments that recognize the sacrifices of our Nation's invaluable servicemembers.

The Triad Flight of Honor sponsored this trip to the Nation's Capital for surviving World War II veterans in the Triad area. Our veterans will visit the World War II, Korean, Vietnam, and Iwo Jima Memorials.

This will be the second Triad Flight of Honor trip. The organization flew their inaugural group of veterans to Washington, DC, on October 3, 2009. I had the honor of visiting with that group of veterans when they returned to Greensboro, NC. I was joined by my father-in-law, MG (Ret) Charles T. Hagan, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, a World War II veteran, just before he died. Two more Triad flights for the spring of 2010 have already been scheduled, and hundreds of veterans in the area are hoping to participate.

World War II was the defining period for a generation that bravely answered the call to serve our country. Young men and women, driven to protect America, enlisted in droves. Unfortunately, too many of those brave servicemembers met an untimely death on the battlefields of Europe and the South Pacific. More than 400,000 American servicemembers were slain during the course of the long war, and over 60 million people worldwide were killed, including 40 million civilians. The Allied Forces' ultimate victory is a testament to the brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who put their lives on the line to fight for liberty and freedom.

This week, 102 Triad veterans will see the memorials dedicated to their service. I thank the Triad Flight of Honor for making these trips a reality.